

WNR program enhances quality of life for military families in Mannheim

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Army Family Housing units in Building 290 on Mannheim's Benjamin Franklin Village sport a new look these days thanks to the Army's Whole Neighborhood Revitalization (WNR) program.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was recently held for the area's first family housing units to receive extensive interior and exterior renovations under the Department of Defense program.

"These new family housing units will improve the quality of life for soldiers and their family members here in Mannheim," said 293rd Base Support Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Donald Bartholomew. Speaking at the ribbon cutting ceremony he added, "These units are one of many to open in the near future."

The WNR program involves extensive renovations and repair of Army housing units throughout U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR). Along with interior renovations, the program also upgrades neighborhood amenities such as entrance areas, landscaping, and parking areas — all to a universal Department of Defense standard by the year 2010.

Families moving into the newly renovated units in Mannheim and throughout USAREUR will be able to enjoy second bathrooms, personal laundry facilities in each apartment, as well as new kitchen cabinets and appliances.

"These apartments are a big improvement and needed in the community," said Eddie Sumlin. "The washer and dryer and the extra bathroom are a big plus." Sumlin and his wife, Sgt. Gabrielle Sumlin and their two children, 2-year-old Collin and 4-year-old Keith are one of the first families to occupy the newly renovated units.

Sgt. First Class Kevin Coy, his wife Yong, and their 13-year-old daughter Tara are also one of the first families to move in. "I was the assistant area coordinator so I watched the progress of the project and reported back to the residents as it was being completed," said Kevin Coy. "Everyone really did a terrific job. The plan was good and the quality of work was excellent."



A ribbon cutting ceremony was recently held for newly renovated Army Family Housing units on Benjamin Franklin Village in Mannheim. The units received extensive interior and exterior renovations under the Department of Defense Whole Neighborhood Revitalization program.

"The private laundry facilities are really going to be nice. I also like the electrical conversion option. That way we won't have a lot of transformers on the kitchen counter," he added.

Jenny Betts, wife of Spec. John Betts, and their two children, 7-month-old Jackalyn and 3-year-old Desiree helped cut the ribbon to the newly renovated units. "I'm really excited about moving in," said Jenny Betts. "It looks so much nicer than where we're living now. The living room is much bigger — the floors are much nicer — and there's a lot more cupboard space in the kitchen."

"I'm really going to enjoy having a washer and dryer in the apartment," said John Betts. "Now we'll have another bedroom and bathroom which is great because we have two children."

A second set of apartments on Benjamin Franklin Village are scheduled to be completed by the end of September with two additional buildings scheduled to be gutted and rebuilt beginning in October. The \$9-million project was funded in 1997 and includes Buildings 290, 292, 293, and 295.

Europe District's Project Engineer Scott Deetz is working on the Mannheim project with the contracting firm SBA Heidelberg ARGE D&B/H. Eisinger GmbH.

(Thanks to Mary Schmidt of the 293rd BSB for contributing to this article.)

The Department of Defense Whole Neighborhood Revitalization program upgrades Army Family Housing units throughout U.S. Army, Europe. Part of the upgrade process includes the addition of a second bathroom.



Interior renovations to Army Family Housing units throughout U.S. Army, Europe include new kitchen cabinets and appliances, built-in closets, as well as new flooring, lighting and paint throughout each unit. Along with interior renovations, the Whole Neighborhood Revitalization program also upgrades neighborhood amenities such as entrance areas, landscaping, and parking areas — all to a universal Department of Defense standard by the year 2010.

